



**Meeting Date:** Friday, May 12, 2006

**Purpose:** Project Development Team Meeting

**Distribution:** Project Development Team Members, public

**From:** Vicki Guarino, Rogue Valley Council of Governments

**Date Prepared:** May 12, 2006

**PDT Attendees:** Laurel Samson, Tanya Henderson, Dorothy Upton, Jerry Marmon, Tracy Rico, Angela Findley, Gary Leaming, Vicki Guarino, Jason Sheadel, Connie Kratovil, Rowdy Bates, Jon Jordan

**PDT Absent:** Jeff Hunter, Jim Raffenburg

**Other Attendees:** Del Robertson, Nick Fortey, James Burford

### 1. Call to Order/Review Agenda/Approve Minutes

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Vicki Guarino called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. She reviewed the agenda and asked for changes to the minutes of the April joint CAC-PDT meeting. The PDT approved the April 17, 2006, minutes as presented.

### 2. CAC Update

Rowdy Bates, CAC

Guarino said Bates was late, so staff will report on CAC recommendations as topics come up, and when Bates arrives.

### 3. Project Update

Gary Leaming, ODOT

Angela Findley, Parsons Brinckerhoff

Leaming reported on meetings ODOT had with county commissioners, city council and the fair board. Through these meetings and staff work, Concept C has been developed. The greatest concern has focused on the Frontage Road concept. Businesses have hired Duane Schultz, a local attorney. ODOT has told the city, county and attorney that the frontage road would not be built until after South Y study is completed and it considers how the frontage road would be integrated into

proposed improvements to the South Y. Also, the city and county would have to agree to frontage road before it would be built.

Findley said staff is working on access management strategy and determining what parcels would be full and partial acquisitions as well as how to provide access to remaining parcels that are not fully acquired. That information is expected to be presented at the next meeting.

Fortey asked how the project would address the frontage road. Leaming said if teams forward it, it will be shown and evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. As to construction, by the time it comes up, the South Y study should have progressed far enough for everyone to see how the South Y improvements would be coordinated with the frontage road. Marmon said ODOT would have to integrate frontage road with South Y anyway, so makes sense to proceed in this way. Findley said frontage is integral to the concepts in this study; it is needed for east-west traffic as previous traffic analysis has demonstrated. Jon Jordon said that from what he has seen of the public meeting and comments, people didn't understand that the project hasn't gotten as far as the finer details of which buildings would be taken. Discussions have been at the concept level and what is needed to move traffic and be safe. He still thinks it's possible to work with businesses, and it is good to see them involved. At one meeting he heard a politician say elected officials should be involved, but he thinks they should not be involved. Also, he said one woman told him there are no congestion problems.

Leaming also reported on meetings he and Guarino had with some local business owners. And at the joint meeting in April, the committee heard mostly from fairgrounds interests. Also, the comments brought some new issues to the table, and they will be reviewed today.

#### 4. Review April 17 Meeting Comments and Responses

Gary Leaming, ODOT

Leaming discussed item by item, topics raised in the April meeting, referring to a handout distributed at the meeting, which listed the comment and the response to date from the project. The CAC discussed this the night before, and its recommendations are noted on posters, and will be brought up in detail as the discussion continues.

**Fourth Bridge.** Upton said it doesn't help because it would draw traffic to the expressway as well as route traffic away from it. Samson said the bridge might only relieve traffic temporarily. Two or three years after the third bridge went in, the Sixth and Seventh street bridges were just as crowded as ever because people were driving more. Marmon asked for CAC comments and Findley said members agreed with dropping it. However, staff explained to them how the bridge may come up in the South Y study, where the focus will be increasing north-south capacity.

**Redwood Avenue flyover over to Hwy. 199** (direct connection to eastbound 199). It would be up to the teams to consider this new idea. The CAC asked for a quick drawing and summary of the pros and cons. Henderson doubted it would be affordable, and if not financially realistic why bother? She and Samson also didn't see traffic benefit. There was discussion about traffic movements and access impacts. This concept seemed doubtful to the PDT, but members agreed to seeing a quick sketch and some pros and cons. Jordan also was concerned about the visual impact of a bridge wall. On right-of way issues, Sheadel said the CAC asked that public/private land ownership be identified on drawings; PDT agreed that this would be helpful.

**Redwood Avenue-Union Avenue flyover.** The CAC said no to this, but liked the slip ramp to Union Avenue. There was discussion about the hospital retaining access by way of the Fairground

road, which will stay open for right turns. The CAC sees this as a solution to eastbound 199 congestion; staff reminded them of other congestion problems. It was noted that previously the CAC wanted to forward this concept, but the PDT turned it down. Samson said the issue is not eastbound traffic but westbound traffic and she can't see the purpose to the slip ramp. Allen Creek impacts also were noted. Henderson asked, why are we going backward? We made these decisions and it seems we are getting off track. Both Jordan and Rico said perhaps there are other issues that should be examined. Rico disagreed that the project is moving backward; the teams are just reconsidering two major issues: the slip ramp and West Park. Staff noted in the west the CAC also wants to reconsider the center turn lane. Samson agreed that this feels like a waste of time, but it also is political matter, and will keep coming up. As long as arguments fester, the political folks won't be able to move past it – especially in the political arena, in a room full of angry people. So if it helps the process by having fewer people objecting, it is worth the time. The PDT discussed meeting more than once a month to move more quickly, but that's not possible since it doesn't give the project management team enough time to perform technical work to prepare for the next meeting, Marmon said. He said he was surprised at questions about not meeting for several months to allow time for the technical analysis; he thought that was made clear from the start. Leaming said lots of meetings were going on as well, and maybe people have forgotten some of their decisions. Findley said there will be another break in a short while. PDT agreed that there is no need to consider Redwood-Union flyover; however the PDT needs to consider the various CAC recommendations for Union Avenue. On the slip ramp, there is a need to clarify the pros and cons. Upton said it seemed CAC's main concern was for getting traffic off Hwy 199, and members are not so concerned about local street impacts. PDT members said they have to be concerned about local streets, not just moving traffic off the highway. Findley noted CAC discussion on several alternatives tended to provide solutions that encourage motorists to use the local street network rather than Hwy. 199, despite some deficiencies in the local roads. PDT agreed that local streets can't handle big traffic increases. Burford recalled concern about slip ramp safety-- moving from higher speed to lower speed in short distance. PDT members said they were comfortable with dismissing the slip ramp, but want to make sure the CAC understands PDT positions. Staff will prepare a handout of pros and cons. Fortey recommended that this position statement could be more of a visual with bullet points, and with more objective terms such as Level of Service or something similar.

**Fairgrounds Signal.** Not a lot of CAC discussion, except citing the need to provide reasonable access to fairgrounds. No new action by the PDT.

**BMX track.** Samson said everyone knew this was temporary permit, and that was a condition of their use of the area.

**City and county comprehensive plans.** It was reported that there had been a lot of discussion about city/county representatives attending the CAC meetings to help members understand plans and existing rights-of-way. Samson said the county has been buying land for fourth bridge corridor. CAC wanted to see land ownership, and see that city plans match this project. The public too said this project needs to coordinate with other planned projects. Findley said the project needs to be able to demonstrate that interagency coordination is occurring. Sheadel said a problem was that no one could answer questions about local road development. Samson and maybe a county representative could come to a CAC meeting to provide this information.

**Re-evaluate West Park Street Connection.** CAC is recommending this. PDT members again said it seems necessary to have a city and county representative at the CAC meeting to resolve questions and provide the information they need. PDT agreed to not reevaluate the West Park decision but

would like more information to go to the CAC. Bates said the CAC wants to look at local street projects—that these projects would not solve problems on the expressway, but maybe they would help solve problems. Also, the smaller, local projects may be cheaper, may be able to be built sooner and allow this project to have fewer impacts to properties overall.

**Dawn Drive frontage road.** This was discussed, but there was no new CAC recommendation. However, the CAC discussed how to make area safer with acceleration/deceleration lanes for Dawn Driver and Arbor Ridge. Marmon said this would be considered at the design stage, however several PDT members said this seems like a good idea. Also, some public feel u-turns are unsafe. Burford said it takes two lanes and a wide shoulder to make a u-turn, but the road could be made even wider at those intersections.

**Center Turn lane.** Three CAC members voted to reconsider this, six voted to drop it and one person was undecided. There was concern that the barrier will encourage people to speed. Also, CAC had been told that it may be ok to do this now but in 20 years it would not be safe. However, Burford said a center turn lane cannot be used on a higher speed highway. CAC members asked about lower speed. Also there were concerns about response time delay for emergency vehicles having to go out of direction to make u-turns. PDT members said the median wouldn't make any difference overall in emergency responses to the area because emergency responders have options of dropping off staff on one side of the road, who then cross the median on foot while emergency vehicles circle back around medians. This occurs often on the interstate. PDT also was concerned because people use the center turn lane as acceleration lane. PDT also was told that CAC members requested updated safety data to see if problems already have been fixed. PDT talked about ways to reduce speed. Henderson offered to provide updated safety statistics to the project management team. She recommended checking with John Vial on specific studies on the topic of center turn lanes.

Bates returned to the PDT review of the Union Avenue slip ramp discussion. Bates said the benefit of the slip ramp would be in separating traffic and getting local business traffic off Hwy. 199, and most traffic would not continue on to Hwy. 238. There are other, better routes to Hwy. 238. PDT was concerned about long back-ups, which will be part of the clarification for the next meeting.

*(10 minute break)*

## 5. Concept C Discussion

Jason Sheadel, ODOT

Connie Kratovil, Parsons Brinckerhoff

Sheadel and Kratovil introduced the new concept, and Sheadel noted the Redwood Circle directional arrow error on the drawing. Kratovil talked about how Concept C was developed through staff discussion about minimizing access and right-of-way impacts. Concerns had been expressed about protecting certain features such as the racetrack. This concept corrects problems with the intersection of Redwood Avenue and Allen Creek Road as had occurred in previous concept East CAC 2.

Staff hasn't yet worked out access to all of the local roads such as Flower and Pansy lanes.. In discussion, the PDT suggested looking a county ownership because may help with locating the curves; also this would work with a fourth bridge at Pansy. The purpose of this would be to protect more of the fairgrounds, but the PDT was concerned about what looks like a greater number of building acquisitions. Staff noted that this concept actually acquires less property. The alignments

were discussed relative to land already owned by the state. ODOT will be meeting with fairgrounds representatives to work out accesses to the fairgrounds.

CAC wanted more information about this concept and the property ownerships. Samson said Concept C seems to address a lot of fairgrounds issues, which need to be addressed; but maybe the alignment could be improved by getting it closer to Redwood Avenue. Kratovil and Sheadel said they may not be able to do much to shift the alignment further south to minimize parcel acquisitions. Burford said other ODOT traffic staff have reviewed this concept and see no fatal flaws in the design. Samson asked how this concept would work with a fourth bridge. Staff agreed to look into this further.

Samson reported that Grants Pass is going to be submitting a Transportation Enhancement fund request to landscape this project between RCC and either Allen Creek Road or the fairgrounds. Work would include plantings. Work would be done in conjunction with construction. Samson asked for a letter of support from the PDT. She will distribute a draft letter to the PDT.

The PDT agreed to continue to develop Concept C.

## 6. Next Steps

Angela Findley, Parsons Brinckerhoff

Findley reviewed all of the CAC recommendations, and recapped the PDT's decisions including getting more information about West Park, including information about street classifications, acceleration/deceleration lanes, update safety data and information about safety of center turn lanes vs. u-turns. Also, refinements on Concept C will continue

In response to a question from Bates, it was noted that the project will look at flyover and pros and cons, but the PDT is concerned that this would not help congestion.

## 7. Public Comment

Del Robertson said he is pleased with some of the concepts that the committees are going to take another look at.

## 8. PDT Comfort Check

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Guarino said this is a time to check in with each PDT member to see how they are feeling about the process – if they're comfortable with what has gone on, or if they have concerns.

Jon Jordan: Good.

Laurel Samson: (Left at end of Concept C discussion)

Jerry Marmon: Process is going well; understands concerns about stepping back and losing ground, but doesn't feel a lot of time has been lost, and it is better to take time now to look at issues thoroughly.

Dorothy Upton: OK

Tracy Rico: OK

Rowdy Bates: Feels a lot better than he did at the CAC meeting where he felt there should have been more support for Concept C.

Tanya Henderson: Good

Connie Kratovil: Good, but the group should figure out a way to anticipate and be better prepared for CAC questions.

Angela Findley: Good, says having property ownership and other information will help.

Gary Leaming: Fine, sees project regaining lost time.

Nick Fortey: Says it's good to have another alternative with some benefits. He has some concern about the two-way left turn lane because this is supposed to be safety project, but concern about businesses and side issues seem to be given more importance. The project needs to focus on safety. In discussion, PDT agreed that committees need to emphasize safety.

Jason Sheadel: He is sorry about slowing down to revisit old decisions. He feels there is no benefit in revisiting old decisions unless there is some new information that needs to be considered.

Bates said that at some point committee members may have to agree to disagree; Marmon agreed and said that we can get some more information to the CAC, but also the committees will have to move on.

## 9. Wrap Up

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Guarino said the next meeting of the CAC will be at 6 p.m. June 8, and the next meeting of the PDT will be 9 a.m., June 9, both in the Rogue Community College board room. The meeting adjourned at noon.